

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1.) (Original) A method for treating soot-containing waste water comprising the following steps:

- a) adding at least one of a surfactant or a flocculating agent to a soot-containing waste water stream and then flowing the soot-containing waste water stream into a clarifier;
- b) settling the soot from the waste water in the clarifier to form a settled soot;
- c) flowing the settled soot from the clarifier into a first reactor basin;
- d) adding to the first reactor an activated sludge; and
- e) degrading the settled soot in the first reactor basin for at least 120 hours.

2.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein step a) comprises adding at least one of a polyamine, a polyamide, an alkoxylated alcohol, or an anionic polymer to the soot-containing waste water stream.

3.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein step a) further comprises adding from 10 to 15 parts per million of the at least one of a surfactant or a flocculating agent to the soot-containing waste water stream.

4.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein step b) further comprises settling the soot at a rate of at least 2.5 meters per hour in the clarifier.

- 5.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein step b) further comprises settling the soot to a concentration of from 3.0 to 8.0 weight percent solids.
- 6.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein step c) further comprising flowing the settled soot from the clarifier into a first reactor basin maintained under aerobic conditions.
- 7.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 6 comprising the further step of maintaining a dissolved oxygen concentration in the first reactor basin at or above 1.0 mg/L to maintain the aerobic conditions.
- 8.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 7 comprising the further step of maintaining the dissolved oxygen concentration in the first reactor basin at from 1.0 to 15.0 mg/L.
- 9.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 1 wherein after step e) the degraded settled soot is dewatered.
- 10.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 9 wherein the degraded settled soot is dewatered using a belt press.
- 11.) (Original) The method as recited in Claim 9 wherein the degraded settled soot is centrifuged to dewater the degraded settled soot.